WATCHMEN

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WATCHMEN

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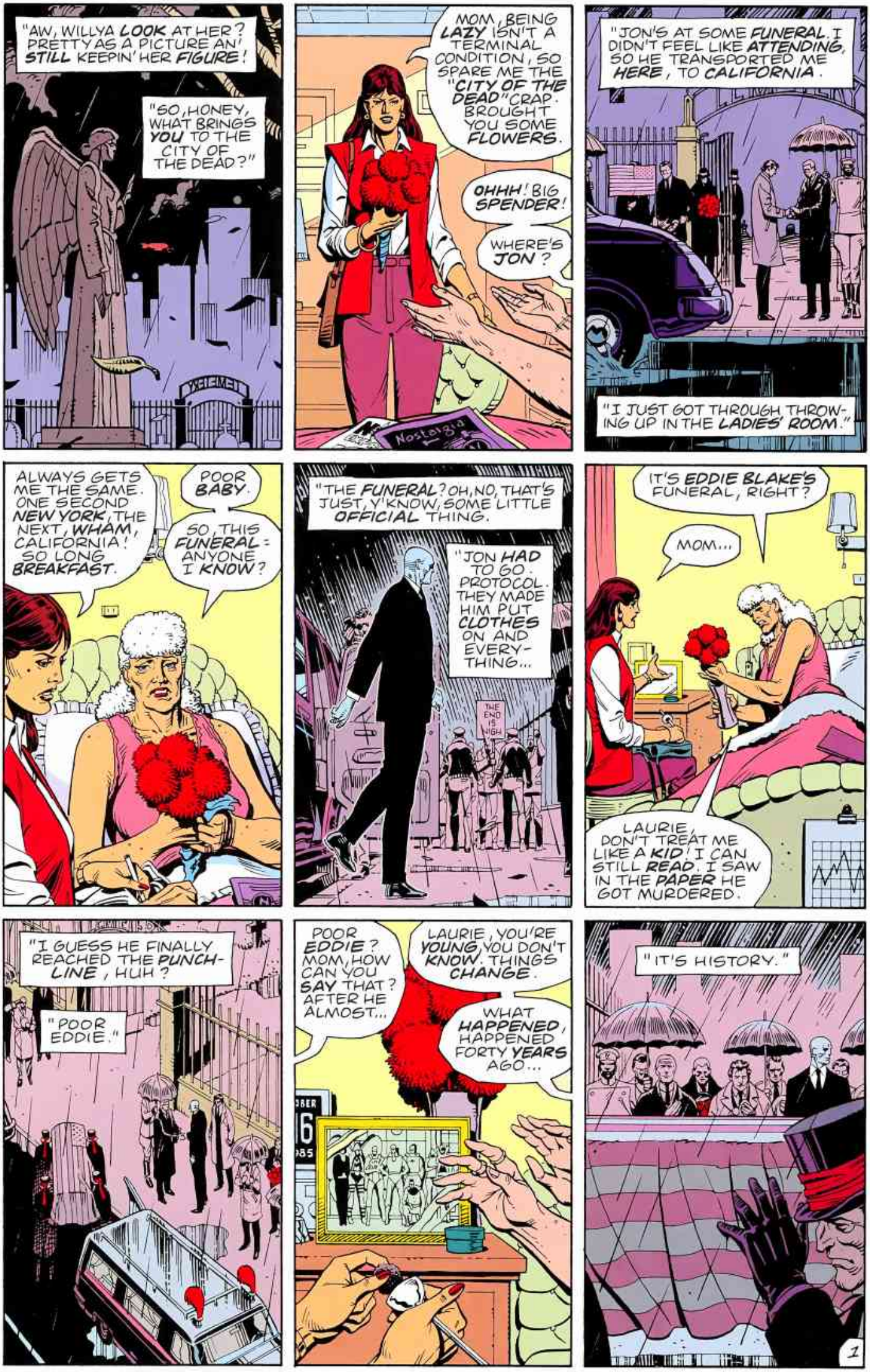

"AW, WILLYA LOOK AT HER? PRETTY AS A PICTURE AN' STILL KEEPIN' HER FIGURE!
"SO, HONEY, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE CITY OF THE DEAD?"
MOM, BEING LAZY ISN'T A TERMINAL CONDITION, SO SPARE ME THE "CITY OF THE DEAD" CRAP. BROUGHT YOU SOME FLOWERS.
OHHH! BIG SPENDER!
WHERE'S JON?
Nostalgia
"JON'S AT SOME FUNERAL. I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE ATTENDING, SO HE TRANSPORTED ME HERE, TO CALIFORNIA.
"I JUST GOT THROUGH THROWING UP IN THE LADIES' ROOM."
ALWAYS GETS ME THE SAME. ONE SECOND NEW YORK, THE NEXT, WHAM, CALIFORNIA! SO LONG BREAKFAST.
POOR BABY.
SO, THIS FUNERAL = ANYONE I KNOW?
"THE FUNERAL? OH, NO, THAT'S JUST, Y'KNOW, SOME LITTLE OFFICIAL THING.
"JON HAD TO GO. PROTOCOL. THEY MADE HIM PUT CLOTHES ON AND EVERYTHING...
THE END IS NIGH
IT'S EDDIE BLAKE'S FUNERAL, RIGHT?
MOM...
LAURIE, DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A KID! I CAN STILL READ. I SAW IN THE PAPER HE GOT MURDERED.
"I GUESS HE FINALLY REACHED THE PUNCH-LINE, HUH?
"POOR EDDIE."
POOR EDDIE? MOM, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? AFTER HE ALMOST...
LAURIE, YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU DON'T KNOW. THINGS CHANGE.
WHAT HAPPENED, HAPPENED FORTY YEARS AGO...
"IT'S HISTORY."
1

YEAH, WELL, SO'S DACHAU. I'D NEVER FORGIVE SOMEBODY WHO DID THAT...
LISTEN, GETTIN' OLD, YOU GET A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. THE BIG STUFF LOOKS SMALLER SOMEHOW.

"IN THE END, YOU JUST WASH YOUR HANDS OF IT AND SHUT IT AWAY."

OH, RIGHT. JUST LIKE THAT.
SO, WHAT, YOU WANT I SHOULD CURL UP AND WHIMPER FOR FORTY YEARS? YOU WANT I SHOULD GO BE A NUN?

"LIFE GOES ON, HONEY.
"LIFE GOES ON."

PLUS, IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY! Y'KNOW... AHUH-HEMM ...
Y'KNOW, YOU AND JON OUGHTTA MOVE OUT HERE, FOR THE WEATHER. WAS IT THIS SUNNY IN NEW YORK TODAY?

"UH, YEAH. YEAH, PRETTY MUCH..."

HM. WELL, THAT'S GOOD. AHUH-HEMM LOTS OF SUNSHINE IS LIKE VITAMINS. IT'S HEALTHY, AN' BEING HEALTHY IS WHAT COUNTS.
NEVER MIND ALL THIS SMART NEW YORK LIVING...
ENTHE GARDENS
REST RESORT

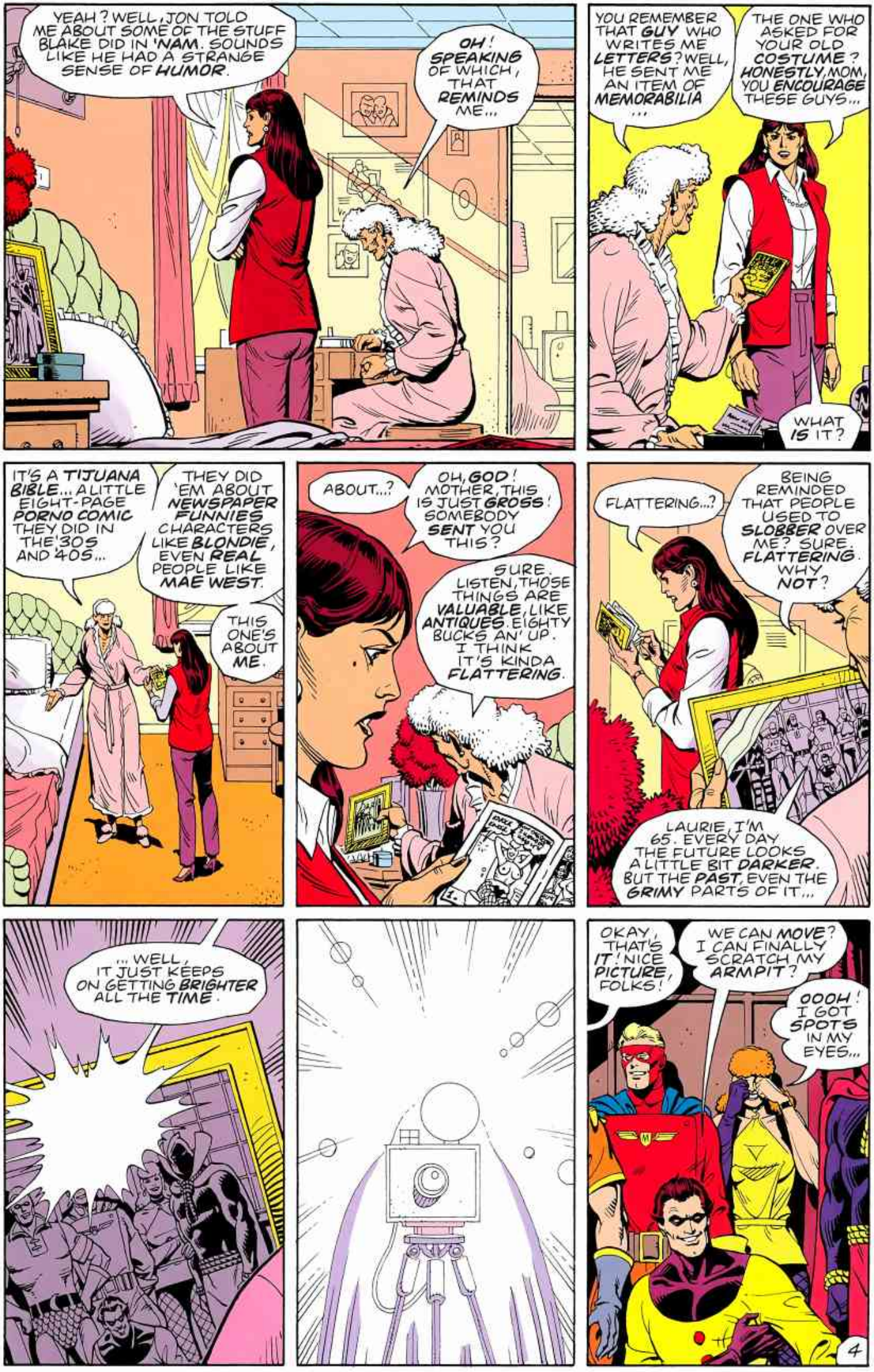
"I MEAN, WITHOUT YOUR HEALTH, WHERE ARE YOU?"

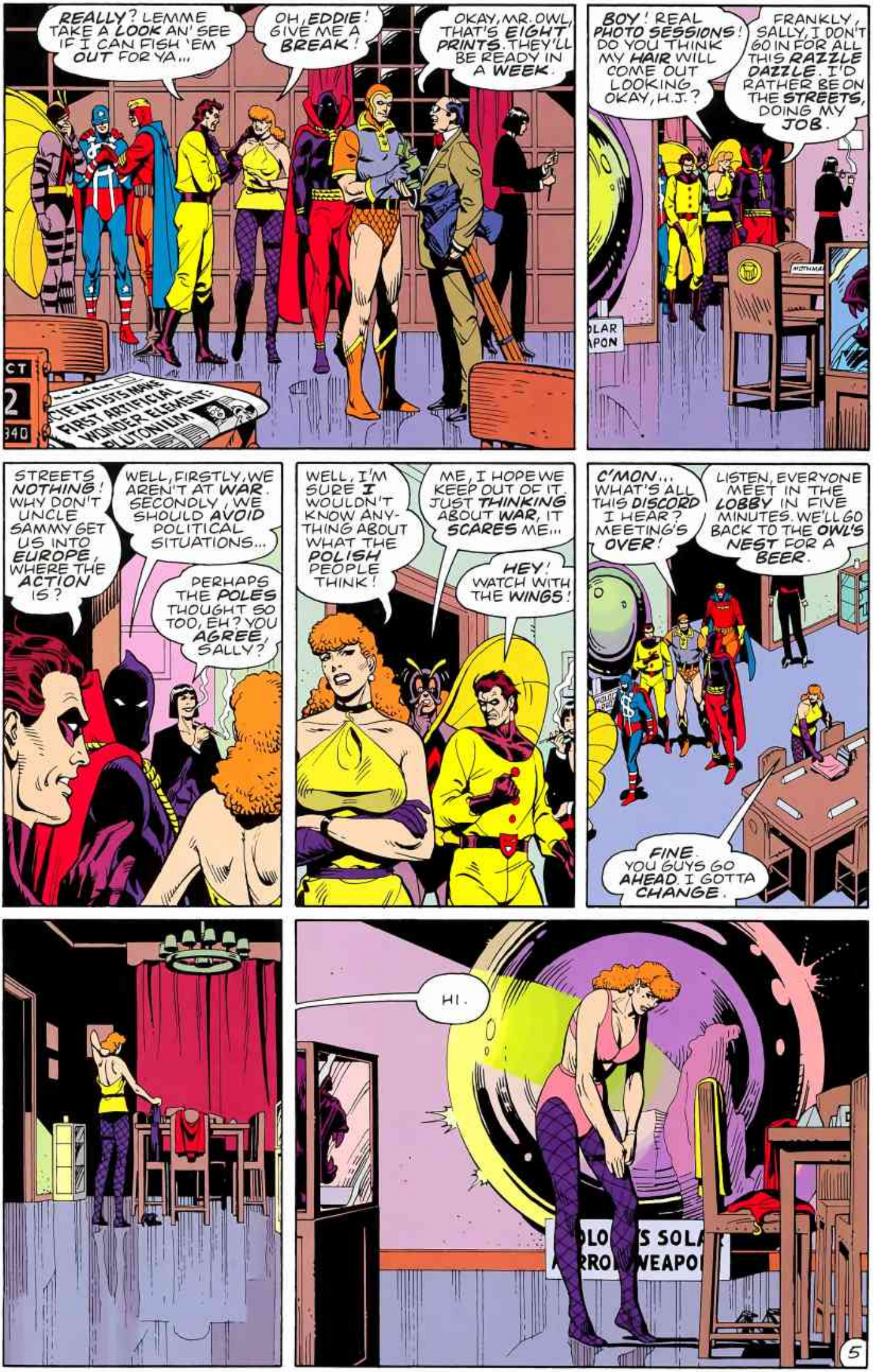
AT MY AGE AHHUM YOU WANNA TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. ALL YOUR OLD BUDDIES HAVE PASSED ON, AND...
MOM, IT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T NEED TO OPEN ANY MORE DOORS OR WINDOWS. LOOK, I'M PUTTING IT OUT, OKAY? IT'S DEAD.
EXTINGUISHED.

ABSENT FRIENDS

Y'KNOW, THAT MAKES JUST THREE OF US MINUTEMEN LEFT NOW. ME, HOLLIS MASON, AND POOR BYRON LEWIS, IN THE BUGHOUSE IN MAINE.
FUNNY... EDDIE WAS THE YOUNGEST. ALWAYS JOKIN' ABOUT HOW OLD WE ALL WERE.

"HE SAID HE'D BURY US.
"Y'SEE, THAT WAS EDDIE, ALWAYS TALKIN' LIKE HE WAS ON TOP OF IT, LIKE IT WAS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN TO HIM..."
EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE
1924 - 1985


YEAH? WELL, JON TOLD ME ABOUT SOME OF THE STUFF BLAKE DID IN 'NAM. SOUNDS LIKE HE HAD A STRANGE SENSE OF HUMOR.
OH! SPEAKING OF WHICH, THAT REMINDS ME...
YOU REMEMBER THAT GUY WHO WRITES ME LETTERS? WELL, HE SENT ME AN ITEM OF MEMORABILIA ...
THE ONE WHO ASKED FOR YOUR OLD COSTUME? HONESTLY, MOM, YOU ENCOURAGE THESE GUYS...
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S A TIJUANA BIBLE... A LITTLE EIGHT-PAGE PORNO COMIC THEY DID IN THE '30S AND '40S...
THEY DID 'EM ABOUT NEWSPAPER FUNNIES CHARACTERS LIKE BLONDIE, EVEN REAL PEOPLE LIKE MAE WEST.
THIS ONE'S ABOUT ME.
ABOUT...?
OH, GOD! MOTHER, THIS IS JUST GROSS! SOMEBODY SENT YOU THIS?
SURE. LISTEN, THOSE THINGS ARE VALUABLE, LIKE ANTIQUES. EIGHTY BUCKS AN' UP. I THINK IT'S KINDA FLATTERING.
FLATTERING...?
BEING REMINDED THAT PEOPLE USED TO SLOBBER OVER ME? SURE. FLATTERING. WHY NOT?
LAURIE, I'M 65. EVERY DAY THE FUTURE LOOKS A LITTLE BIT DARKER. BUT THE PAST, EVEN THE GRIMY PARTS OF IT...
... WELL, IT JUST KEEPS ON GETTING BRIGHTER ALL THE TIME.
OKAY, THAT'S IT! NICE PICTURE, FOLKS!
WE CAN MOVE? I CAN FINALLY SCRATCH MY ARMPIT?
OOOH! I GOT SPOTS IN MY EYES...
4


REALLY? LEMME TAKE A LOOK AN' SEE IF I CAN FISH 'EM OUT FOR YA...
OH, EDDIE! GIVE ME A BREAK!
OKAY, MR. OWL, THAT'S EIGHT PRINTS. THEY'LL BE READY IN A WEEK.
SCIENTISTS MAKE FIRST ARTIFICIAL WONDER ELEMENT: PLUTONIUM
BOY! REAL PHOTO SESSIONS! DO YOU THINK MY HAIR WILL COME OUT LOOKING OKAY, H.J.?
FRANKLY, SALLY, I DON'T GO IN FOR ALL THIS RAZZLE DAZZLE. I'D RATHER BE ON THE STREETS, DOING MY JOB.
STREETS NOTHING! WHY DON'T UNCLE SAMMY GET US INTO EUROPE, WHERE THE ACTION IS?
WELL, FIRSTLY, WE AREN'T AT WAR. SECONDLY, WE SHOULD AVOID POLITICAL SITUATIONS...
PERHAPS THE POLES THOUGHT SO TOO, EH? YOU AGREE, SALLY?
WELL, I'M SURE I WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT THE POLISH PEOPLE THINK!
ME, I HOPE WE KEEP OUT OF IT. JUST THINKING ABOUT WAR, IT SCARES ME...
HEY! WATCH WITH THE WINGS!
C'MON... WHAT'S ALL THIS DISCORD I HEAR? MEETING'S OVER!
LISTEN, EVERYONE MEET IN THE LOBBY IN FIVE MINUTES. WE'LL GO BACK TO THE OWL'S NEST FOR A BEER.
FINE. YOU GUYS GO AHEAD. I GOTTA CHANGE.
HI.

EDDIE? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU KNEW I WAS CHANGING...
SURE I DID. YOU ANNOUNCED IT LOUD ENOUGH.
C'MON, BABY. I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED. YOU GOTTA HAVE SOME REASON FOR WEARIN' AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS, HUH?
E-EDDIE, NO...
SURE. NO. SPELLED Y, E...
SPELLED ENN OH!
AAK
EDDIE?
AHHHUUGHH
GUHH
MOLOCH'S SOLAR MIRROR WEAPON
OH, NO.
OH, NO, EDDIE, DON'T...
OH, GODDD...
SALLY? WHAT'S KEEPING YOU?
GHUUCHH
6

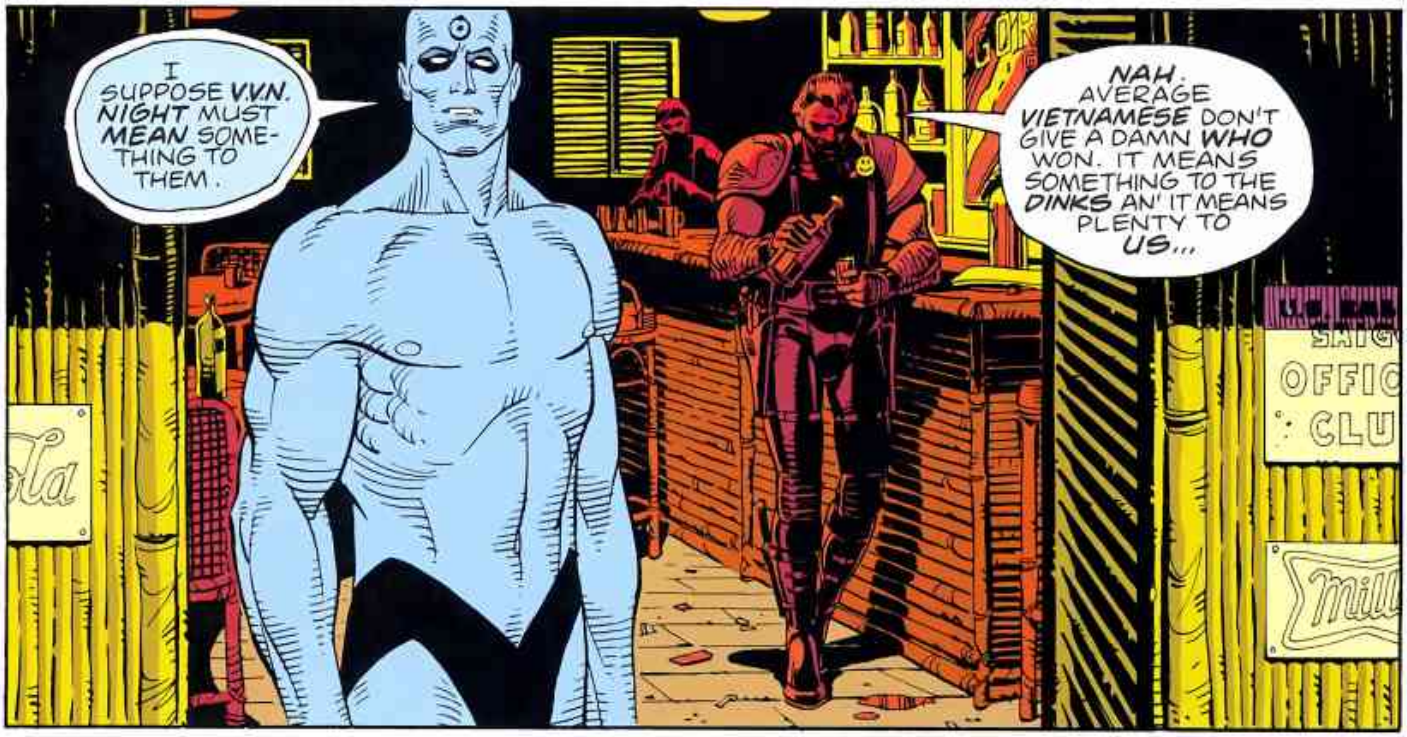
THE OTHERS ARE ALL WAITING TO ...
YOU VICIOUS LITTLE SON OF A BITCH...
HEY, WAIT! SHE WANTED ME TO DO IT! SHE...
NNNAH
YOU SICK LITTLE BASTARD, I'M GOING TO BREAK YOUR NECK...
UUUGGH
:HUHH:
:AHUHH:
THIS IS WHAT YOU LIKE, HUH?
THIS IS WHAT GETS YOU HOT...
GET OUT.
:AHUHH: :HUHHH: OH, SURE. SURE. I'M GOING. BUT I GOT YOUR NUMBER, SEE? AND ONE OF THESE DAYS, THE JOKE'S GONNA BE ON YOU...
GET OUT!

GET UP...
AND, FOR GOD'S SAKE, COVER YOUR-SELF.
MOTHER, THIS IS VILE!
OH! TREAT ME OUGH, SUGAR.
OH SAY, BABY, THIS IS TOPS!
ACME LUSH CO.
I JUST, JEEZ, I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN STAND BEING DEGRADED LIKE THIS. I MEAN, DON'T YOU CARE HOW PEOPLE SEE YOU?
MOTHER?
HM?
I SAID, DOESN'T THIS SLEAZEBALL IMAGE BOTHER YOU? HONESTLY, MOTHER, YOU...
WHY DO YOU ONLY CALL ME "MOTHER" WHEN YOU'RE MAD?
ANYWAY, WHAT ABOUT YOUR IMAGE? AT LEAST I DON'T SLEEP WITH AN H-BOMB...
JON IS NOT AN H-BOMB!
HONEY, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO GET THE H-BOMB LAID EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
TO SALLY JUPITER BEST WISHES Varga
UH-HUH. RIGHT. I SEE.
OF COURSE, YOU REALIZE YOU'RE BEING TOTALLY UNFAIR?
YEAH? WELL, THINGS ARE TOUGH ALL OVER, CUPCAKE, AN' IT RAINS ON THE JUST AN' THE UNJUST ALIKE...
...EXCEPT IN CALIFORNIA.
8

MAN THAT IS BORN OF WOMAN HATH BUT A SHORT TIME TO LIVE, AND IS FULL OF MISERIES.
HE COMETH UP, AND IS CUT DOWN, LIKE A FLOWER. HE FLEETH AS IT WERE A SHADOW, AND NEVER CONTINUETH IN ONE STAY.
IN THE MIDST OF LIFE, WE ARE IN DEATH.
OF WHOM MAY WE SEEK SUCCOR BUT OF THEE, O LORD, WHO FOR OUR SINS ART JUSTLY DISPLEASED.
WELL, FIRSTLY, LET ME SAY I'M PLEASED TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU HERE.
VERY PLEASED.
SECONDLY, FOR THOSE WHO ONLY KNOW ME AS CAPTAIN METROPOLIS, THE NAME'S NELSON GARDNER. CALL ME NELSON.
THIRD, UH, I GUESS I SHOULD WELCOME EVERYBODY TO THE FIRST EVER MEETING OF THE CRIMEBUSTERS!
:BURRUP:
FRENCH WITHDRAW- MILITARY COMMIT- MENT FROM NATO
HEART TRANS- PLANT PATIENT
9

WHY "THE CRIME-BUSTERS"?
WELL, AS YOU KNOW, THIS COUNTRY HASN'T HAD AN ORGANIZATION OF MASKED ADVENTURERS SINCE THE MINUTEMEN DISBANDED IN '49.
SPECIALIZED LAW ENFORCEMENT IS STANDING STILL. CRIME ISN'T.
NEW SOCIAL EVILS EMERGE EVERY DAY: PROMISCUITY, DRUGS, CAMPUS SUBVERSION, YOU NAME IT! NOW, BY BANDING TOGETHER AS THE CRIME-BUSTERS, WE...
BULLSHIT.
New York Gaze
DR. MANHAT
IMPERIALIS
WHAT?
I SAID BULLSHIT. THIS WHOLE IDEA, THIS CRIMEBUSTERS SHTICK, IT STINKS.
WHAT IT IS, NELLY, IS THAT YOU'RE GETTIN' OLD AND YOU WANNA GO ON PLAYIN' COWBOYS AND INDIANS!
TH-THAT ISN'T TRUE...
UH, LISTEN, LET'S NOT THROW THE IDEA OUT RIGHT AWAY. ME AND RORSCHACH HAVE MADE HEADWAY INTO THE GANG PROBLEM BY POOLING OUR EFFORTS...
OBVIOUSLY, I AGREE -- BUT A GROUP THIS SIZE SEEMS MORE LIKE A PUBLICITY EXERCISE SOMEHOW. IT'S TOO BIG AND UNWIELDY...
SURELY, THAT'S JUST AN ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEM? WITH THE RIGHT PERSON COORDINATING THE GROUP, I THINK...
OH, AN' I WONDER WHO THAT WOULD BE?
GOT ANY IDEAS, OZZY? I MEAN, YOU ARE THE SMARTEST GUY IN THE WORLD, RIGHT?
IT DOESN'T REQUIRE GENIUS TO SEE THAT AMERICA HAS PROBLEMS THAT NEED TACKLING...
DAMN STRAIGHT. AN' IT TAKES A MORON TO THINK THEY'RE SMALL ENOUGH FOR CLOWNS LIKE YOU GUYS TO HANDLE.
WHAT'S GOING DOWN IN THIS WORLD, YOU GOT NO IDEA.
BELIEVE ME.
10

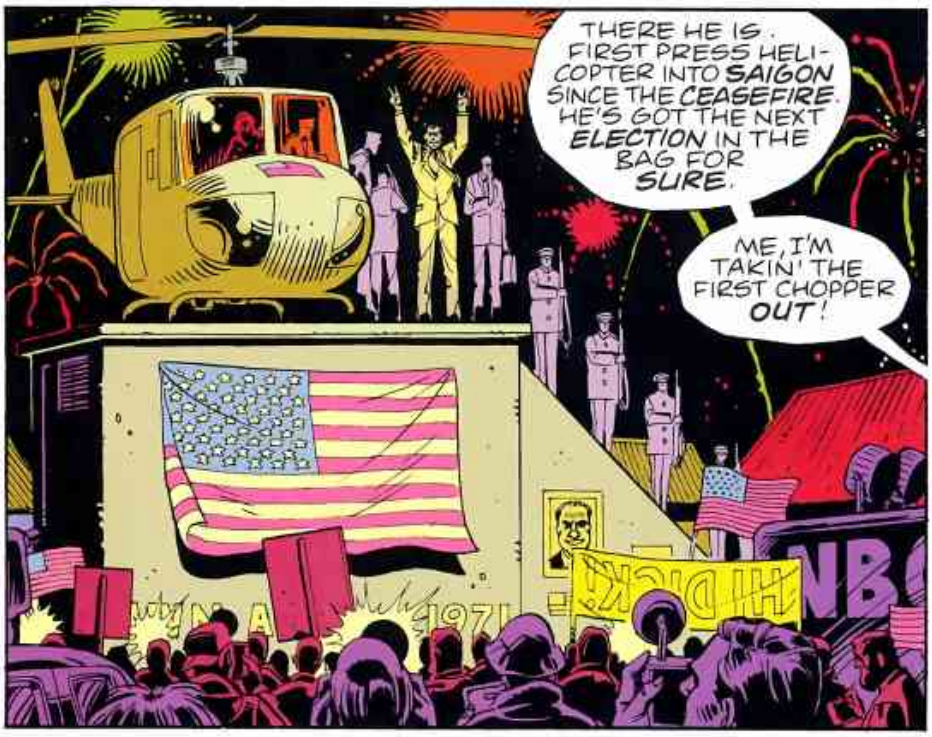
I THINK I'M AS WELL-INFORMED AS ANYONE. GIVEN CORRECT HANDLING, NONE OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS ARE INSURMOUNTABLE.
WHICH YOU GOT IN SPADES, RIGHT?
ALL IT TAKES IS A LITTLE INTELLIGENCE.
YOU PEOPLE ARE A JOKE. YOU HEAR MOLOCH'S BACK IN TOWN, YOU THINK "OH, BOY! LET'S GANG UP AND BUST HIM!"
YOU THINK THAT MATTERS? YOU THINK THAT SOLVES ANYTHING?
WELL, OF COURSE IT MATTERS. IF...
IT DON'T MATTER SQUAT. HERE --LEMME SHOW YA WHY IT DON'T MATTER...
HEY! WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IT DON'T MATTER SQUAT BECAUSE INSIDE THIRTY YEARS THE NUKES ARE GONNA BE FLYIN' LIKE MAYBUGS...
MY DISPLAY...
...AND THEN OZZY HERE IS GONNA BE THE SMARTEST MAN ON THE CINDER. NOW, PARDON ME, BUT I GOT AN APPOINTMENT.
SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS.
JON, I THINK I'D LIKE TO GO HOME NOW, PLEASE.
LISTEN, UH, NELSON... THIS ISN'T WORKING OUT. MAYBE...
PLEASE! DON'T ALL LEAVE...
SOMEBODY HAS TO DO IT, DON'T YOU SEE?
SOMEBODY HAS TO SAVE THE WORLD...
...O LORD MOST MIGHTY, O HOLY AND MOST MERCIFUL SAVIOR, DELIVER US NOT INTO THE BITTER PAINS OF ETERNAL DEATH.
11


I SUPPOSE V.V.N. NIGHT MUST MEAN SOMETHING TO THEM.
NAH. AVERAGE VIETNAMESE DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHO WON. IT MEANS SOMETHING TO THE DINKS AN' IT MEANS PLENTY TO US...
OFFIC
CLU

I MEAN, IF WE'D LOST THIS WAR... I DUNNO. I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE DRIVEN US A LITTLE CRAZY, Y'KNOW? AS A COUNTRY.
BUT THANKS TO YOU, WE DIDN'T, RIGHT?
DOWNA HATCH.

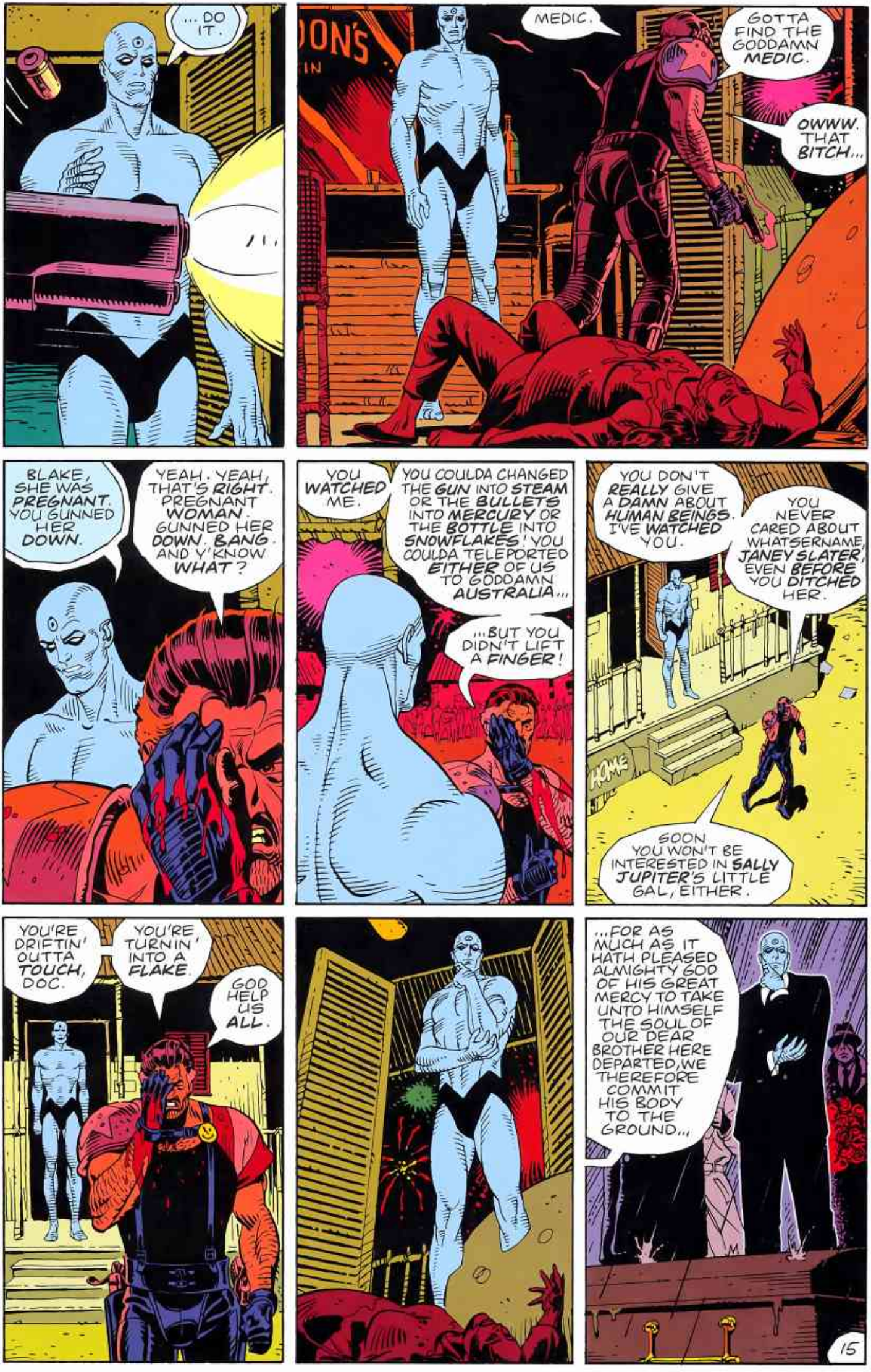
YOU SOUND BITTER. YOU'RE A STRANGE MAN, BLAKE. YOU HAVE STRANGE ATTITUDES TO LIFE AND WAR.
STRANGE?
LISTEN... ONCE YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT A JOKE EVERYTHING IS, BEING THE COMEDIAN'S THE ONLY THING MAKES SENSE.

THE CHARRED VILLAGES, THE BOYS WITH NECKLACES OF HUMAN EARS... THESE ARE PART OF THE JOKE?
HEY... I NEVER SAID IT WAS A GOOD JOKE! I'M JUST PLAYIN' ALONG WITH THE GAG...
HA! LOOKITHAT!


THERE HE IS. FIRST PRESS HELICOPTER INTO SAIGON SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. HE'S GOT THE NEXT ELECTION IN THE BAG FOR SURE.
ME, I'M TAKIN' THE FIRST CHOPPER OUT!

YOU'RE ANXIOUS TO LEAVE?
DOC, ARE YOU KIDDING? I HATE THIS PLACE. I HATE THE TEMPERATURE. I HATE THE SMELL, I HATE THIS ROTTEN CHEAP BOURBON.
FIRST CHOPPER OUT, MAN, I'M GONE.
MR. EDDIE?

OH, GREAT. OH, THANK YOU, GOD. THAT'S JUST WHAT I NEEDED ...
NOW WAR IS OVER, MR. EDDIE.
NOW I MUST TALK WITH YOU.
LISTEN, WE GOT NOTHIN' TO TALK ABOUT. I'M LEAVIN': SAIGON NUMBER TEN, NEW YORK NUMBER ONE, OKAY?
YOU ... WALK AWAY ... FROM THIS?
SURE.
BUT ME, I CANNOT WALK AWAY FROM WHAT GROWS IN MY BELLY. I CANNOT FORGET!
WELL, THAT'S UNFORTUNATE, BECAUSE THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M GONNA DO ...
FORGET YOU, FORGET YOUR CRUDDY LITTLE COUNTRY, ALL OF IT.
I DO NOT THINK SO.
I THINK YOU REMEMBER ME AND MY COUNTRY.
I THINK YOU REMEMBER US AS LONG AS YOU LIVE.
HUH? WHAT'S ...
GORD
GIN
MY FACE...
GHUUHUHH
WHAT DID YOU DO, YOU BITCH, YOU HURT MY FACE, YOU WHORE, YOU...
... FILTHY, STINKING, WORTHLESS...
BLAKE?
...LOUSY PIECE OF...
BLAKE, DON'T...
14


... DO IT.
MEDIC.
GOTTA FIND THE GODDAMN MEDIC.
OWWW. THAT BITCH...
BLAKE, SHE WAS PREGNANT. YOU GUNNED HER DOWN.
YEAH. YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. PREGNANT WOMAN. GUNNED HER DOWN. BANG. AND Y'KNOW WHAT?
YOU WATCHED ME.
YOU COULDA CHANGED THE GUN INTO STEAM OR THE BULLETS INTO MERCURY OR THE BOTTLE INTO SNOWFLAKES! YOU COULDA TELEPORTED EITHER OF US TO GODDAMN AUSTRALIA...
...BUT YOU DIDN'T LIFT A FINGER!
YOU DON'T REALLY GIVE A DAMN ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS. I'VE WATCHED YOU.
YOU NEVER CARED ABOUT WHATSERNAME, JANEY SLATER, EVEN BEFORE YOU DITCHED HER.
SOON YOU WON'T BE INTERESTED IN SALLY JUPITER'S LITTLE GAL, EITHER.
YOU'RE DRIFTIN' OUTTA TOUCH, DOC.
YOU'RE TURNIN' INTO A FLAKE.
GOD HELP US ALL.
...FOR AS MUCH AS IT HATH PLEASED ALMIGHTY GOD OF HIS GREAT MERCY TO TAKE UNTO HIMSELF THE SOUL OF OUR DEAR BROTHER HERE DEPARTED, WE THEREFORE COMMIT HIS BODY TO THE GROUND...
15

EARTH TO EARTH...
ASHES TO ASHES...
...DUST TO DUST.
PLEASE... IF EVERYBODY WILL JUST CLEAR THE STREETS...
LISSEN, YOU LITTLE PUNKS, YOU BETTER GET BACK IN YA RAT HOLES! I GOT RIOT GAS, I GOT RUBBER BULLETS...

THERE'S NO NEED FOR PANIC. THE POLICE STRIKE IS BEING NEGOTIATED RIGHT NOW...
AAK!
OKAY. THAT DOES IT.
YOU PIG! YOU CALL YOURSELF A COMEDIAN? YOU'RE A PIG ANNA RAPIST!
WE DON'T WANT VIGILANTES! WE WANT REG'LAR COPS!
MY SON IS A POLICE OFFICER, YOU FAGGOTS!
...TWO POTATO, THREE POTATO...
... FOUR POTATO. HEADS UP!
GOD, LOOK, I'M SORRY. YOU HAVEN'T LEFT US ANY CHOICE. THIS STUFF IS DANGEROUS. PLEASE CLEAR THE STREETS...
COMEDIAN, THIS IS A NIGHTMARE! THE WHOLE CITY IS ERUPTING. HOW LONG CAN WE KEEP THIS UP?
HA! LOOK AT 'EM.
RUN, YOU SUCKERS!
COMEDIAN? I SAID...
I HEARD WHAT YOU SAID. MY GOVERNMENT CONTACTS TELL ME SOME NEW ACT IS BEING HERDED THROUGH.
UNTIL THEN, WE'RE SOCIETY'S ONLY PROTECTION. WE KEEP IT UP LONG AS WE HAVE TO.
PROTECTION?
WHO ARE WE PROTECTING THEM FROM?
COPS SAY: LET THEM DO IT
17

FROM THEMSELVES. WHATSAMATTER? DON'T YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE UNLESS YOU'RE UP AGAINST SOME SCHMUCK IN A HALLOWEEN SUIT?
SPEAKIN' O' WHICH, WHERE THE HELL ARE RORSCHACH AN' THE OTHERS?
JON AND LAURIE ARE HANDLING THE RIOTS IN WASHINGTON. RORSCHACH'S ACROSS TOWN, TRYING TO HOLD THE LOWER EAST SIDE.
HE, UH, HE WORKS MOSTLY ON HIS OWN THESE DAYS...
RORSCHACH'S NUTS. HE'S BEEN NUTS EVER SINCE THAT KIDNAPPING HE HANDLED THREE YEARS BACK.
HIM, BYRON LEWIS, JON GODDAMN WALKING H-BOMB OSTERMAN ... ALL NUTS.
BUT NOT YOU?
NO. NOT ME. I KEEP THINGS IN PROPORTION AN' TRY TA SEE THE FUNNY SIDE...
DROP THAT CAN, YOU LITTLE FREAK!
HA! YOU SEE THIS?
I SEEN THAT WRITTEN UP ALL OVER DURIN' THIS LAST TWO WEEKS! THEY DON'T LIKE US AN' THEY DON'T TRUST US.
THIS WHOLE SITUATION ... IT'S HORRIBLE ...
WELL, ME, I KINDA LIKE IT WHEN THINGS GET WEIRD, Y'KNOW? I LIKE IT WHEN ALL THE CARDS ARE ON THE TABLE.
BUT THE COUNTRY'S DISINTEGRATING. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO AMERICA? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE AMERICAN DREAM?
IT CAME TRUE.
YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT IT.
NOW C'MON ... LET'S REALLY PUT THESE JOKERS THROUGH SOME CHANGES.
"...WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY THAT IT MAY BE LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, ACCORDING TO THE MIGHTY WORKING..."
... WHEREBY HE IS ABLE TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF.

"I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, SAYING UNTO ME, WRITE...
"FROM HENCEFORTH, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD, EVEN SO SAITH THE SPIRIT, FOR THEY REST FROM THEIR LABORS.
EDWARD MORGAN
"LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US."
"CHRIST HAVE MERCY UPON US."
"LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US.
"OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME...
"THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES...
"AS WE FORGIVE THOSE THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US...
CEMETERY
"AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION...
"BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.
"AMEN."

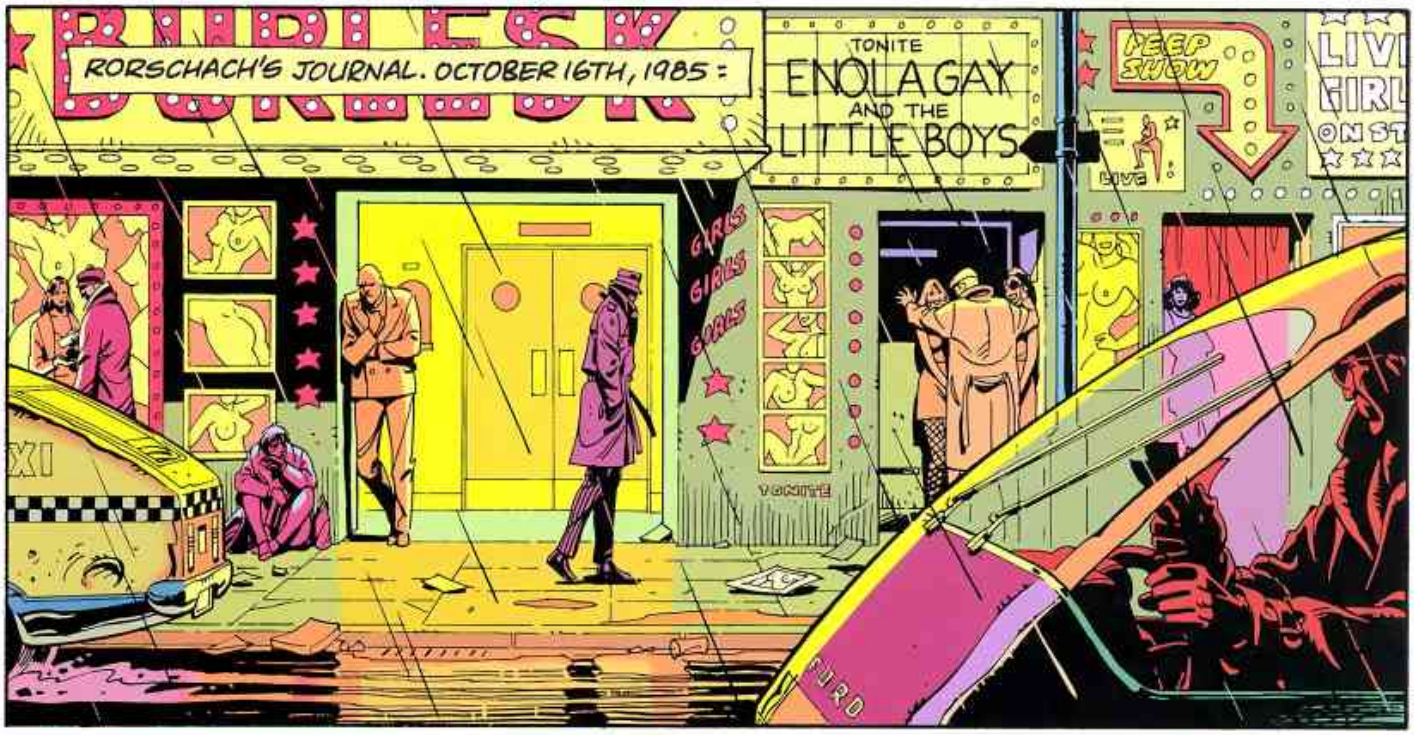
AAAAAAAA
20

OH, GOD, PLEASE ...
PLEASE, THIS MUST BE A MISTAKE! YOU HAVE THE WRONG PERSON...
NO.
EDGAR WILLIAM JACOBI, ALSO KNOWN AS EDGAR WILLIAM VAUGHN, ALSO KNOWN AS WILLIAM EDGAR BRIGHT...
...ALSO KNOWN AS MOLOCH.
I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I'M A BUSINESSMAN, A RETIRED BUSINESSM--
AAAA!
LYING. DO IT AGAIN, BROKEN ARM. NOT JOKING.
OH, GOD, PLEASE ... I SPENT THE SEVENTIES IN JAIL. I'M NOT MOLOCH ANYMORE. I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE. WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
HEARD YOU ATTENDED FUNERAL TODAY.
WHY?
THE FUNERAL?
I... I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW WHY I WENT.
I JUST FELT I SHOULD. I'D BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE COMEDIAN SINCE HE VISITED ME, AND...
AUHH! OH, GOD! WHAT DID I SAY?
HOW?
HOW DO YOU KNOW EDWARD BLAKE WAS THE COMEDIAN?
WH-WHEN HE BROKE IN, TO SEE ME! HE WAS DRUNK. HAD HIS MASK OFF. THE GUY WAS SCARED OF SOMETHING, CRYING...
ENEMIES FOR FORTY YEARS. WHY SHOULD HE VISIT YOU?
I DON'T KNOW. I WOKE UP, HE WAS THERE, IN MY ROOM, DRUNK, BABBLING, NOT MAKING SENSE...
I SAT IN BED, SCARED STIFF. HE SOUNDED CRAZY. I THOUGHT HE WAS GONNA KILL ME.
"THIS WAS, LIKE, A WEEK BEFORE I HEARD HE'D DIED.
"I GUESS IT WAS HIS LAST PERFORMANCE."
21

IT'S A JOKE.
S'ALL A JOKE.
I MEAN, LEMME TELLYA, WHEN I STARTED OUT, WHEN I WAS A KID, CLEANIN' UP THE WATER-FRONTS, IT WAS, LIKE, REAL EASY.
THE WORLD WAS TOUGH, YOU JUST HADDA BE TOUGHER, RIGHT?
NOT ANYMORE.
I MEAN, I THOUGHT I KNEW HOW IT WAS, HOW THE WORLD WAS. BUT THEN I FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS GAG, THIS JOKE...
YOU'RE PART OF IT, MOLOCH OL' PAL. Y' KNOW THAT?
IF I THOUGHT YOU DID KNOW ... I SAW YOUR NAME ON THE LIST, YOU AND JANEY SLATER, BUT IF I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN ON THIS...
...I'D KILL YOU. YOU UNDER-STAND?
KILL YOU.
I MEAN, YOU FOUGHT THAT BIG BLUE GEEK! YOU KNOW WHAT HIS HEAD'S LIKE!
I TELLYA, WHO KNOWS WHICH WAY HE'LL JUMP IF ANYBODY MESSES WITH HIM...
HE MIGHT... HE MIGHT JUST...
NAH. I DON'WANNA THINK. I DON'WANNA THINK ABOUT IT.
DON'TCHA GOT ANY BOOZE IN THIS PLACE?
I MEAN, WHAT GETS ME, RIGHT? WHAT GETS ME, I NEED NEVER HAVE LOOKED OUTTA THE AIRSHIP WINDOW AT THAT MOMENT, NEVER SEEN THE GODDAMN ISLAND, NEVER GOT INVOLVED...
HAH! THERE Y'ARE, YA SUMBITCH ...
NK NK NK
PAHH
IT STINKS.
IT ALL STINKS.
22

I MEAN, THIS JOKE, I MEAN, I THOUGHT I WAS THE COMEDIAN, Y'KNOW?
OH, GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I CAN'T BELIEVE ANYBODY WOULD DO THAT...
I CAN'T ...
I CAN'T BELIEVE ...
AHUHH.
AHUH AHUH AHHUHHH.
OH, JESUS, LOOK AT ME. I'M CRYIN'. YOU DON'T KNOW. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING.
ON THAT ISLAND THEY GOT WRITERS, SCIENTISTS, ARTISTS, AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING...
I MEAN, I DONE SOME BAD THINGS. I DID BAD THINGS TO WOMEN.
I SHOT KIDS! IN 'NAM I SHOT KIDS ...
BUT I NEVER DID ANY-THING LIKE, LIKE...
OH, MOTHER. OH, FORGIVE ME.
FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME...
I MEAN, WHAT'S FUNNY? WHAT'S SO GODDAMNED FUNNY?
I DON'T GET IT. SOMEBODY EXPLAIN...
SOMEBODY EXPLAIN IT TO ME.
... AND THEN HE LEFT.
I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL IT WAS ABOUT...

HURM.
FUNNY STORY.
SOUNDS UNBELIEVABLE.
PROBABLY TRUE.
S-SO, WHAT, YOU MEAN THAT'S IT? I'M CLEAN?
CLEAN?
YOU?
SEARCHED YOUR HOUSE, BEFORE YOU GOT BACK. KNEW YOU WOULDN'T MIND. FOUND ILLEGAL DRUGS.
ILLEGAL...? BUT I DON'T USE DRUGS! LISTEN, IF YOU'RE PLANTING EVIDENCE ...
LAETRIL. PHONY MEDICATION. MADE FROM APRICOT PITS. OUTLAWED THREE YEARS AGO.
ILLEGAL.
OH, COME ON ... YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS? LOOK, I HEARD MAYBE IT DIDN'T WORK, BUT WHEN YOU'RE DESPERATE YOU'LL TRY ANYTHING. PLEASE DON'T CONFISCATE IT.
I HAVE CANCER.
CANCER? WHAT KIND CANCER?
HEH.
WELL, NOW, Y'KNOW THAT KIND OF CANCER THAT YOU EVENTUALLY GET BETTER FROM?
YES.
WELL, THAT AIN'T THE KIND OF CANCER I GOT.
HUHNH.
VERY WELL. COPIED DOWN NAME OF COMPANY. REPORT THEM LATER.
YOU'RE OFF HOOK. FOR NOW.
BE SEEING YOU.
KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE.
24


RORSCHACH'S JOURNAL. OCTOBER 16TH, 1985 :
TONITE
ENOLA GAY
AND THE
LITTLE BOYS
PEEP SHOW
LIVE
GIRLS
GIRLS
GIRLS
TONITE
FURO

42ND STREET: WOMEN'S BREASTS DRAPED ACROSS EVERY BILLBOARD, EVERY DISPLAY, LITTERING THE SIDEWALK.
WAS OFFERED SWEDISH LOVE AND FRENCH LOVE...

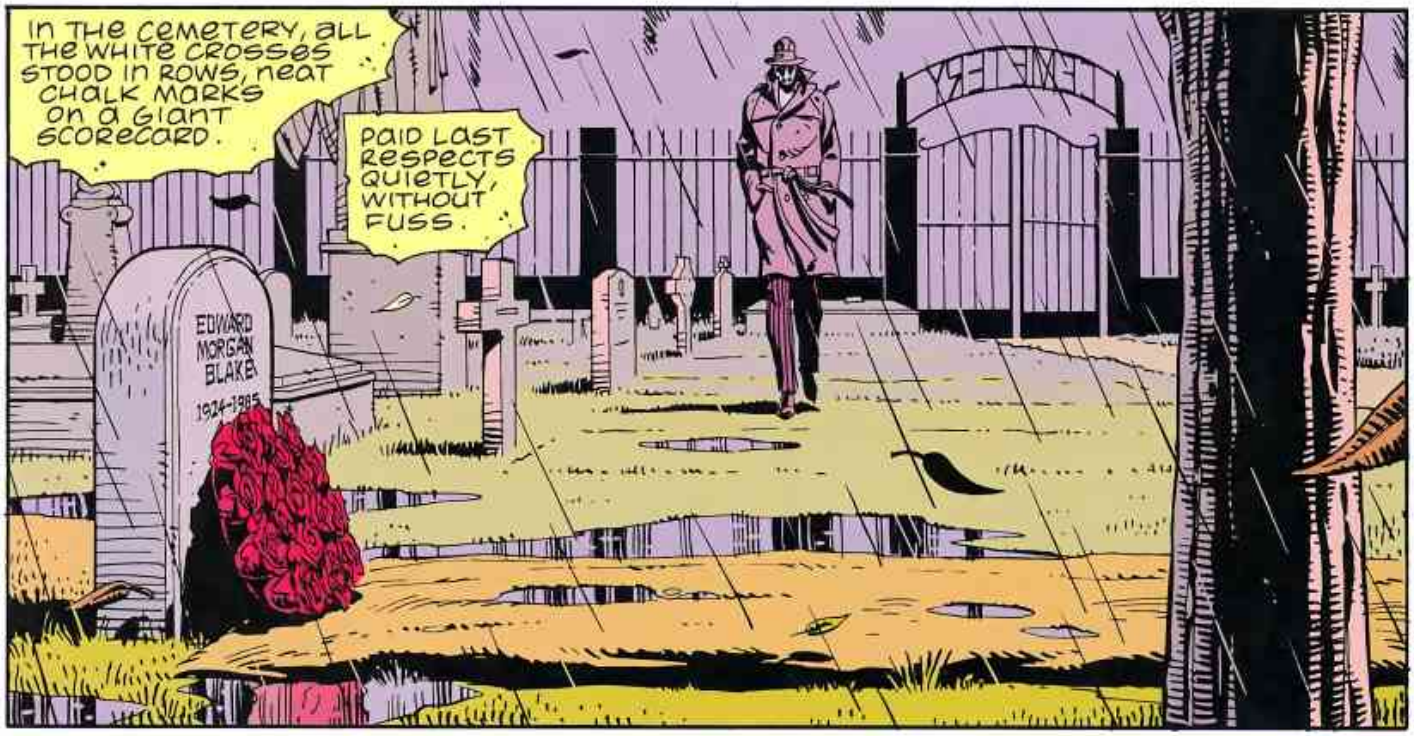
...BUT NOT AMERICAN LOVE.
AMERICAN LOVE; LIKE COKE IN GREEN GLASS BOTTLES...

THEY DON'T MAKE IT ANYMORE.

THOUGHT ABOUT MOLOCH'S STORY, ON WAY TO CEMETERY.
COULD ALL BE LIES. COULD ALL BE PART OF REVENGE SCHEME, PLANNED DURING HIS DECADE BEHIND BARS.

BUT IF TRUE, THEN WHAT? PUZZLING REFERENCE TO AN ISLAND. ALSO TO DR. MANHATTAN. MIGHT HE BE AT RISK IN SOME WAY? SO MANY QUESTIONS.
NEVER MIND. ANSWERS SOON. NOTHING IS INSOLUBLE.

NOTHING IS HOPELESS.
NOT WHILE THERE'S LIFE.


In the cemetery, all the white crosses stood in rows, neat chalk marks on a giant scorecard.
Paid last respects quietly, without fuss.
EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE
1924-1985

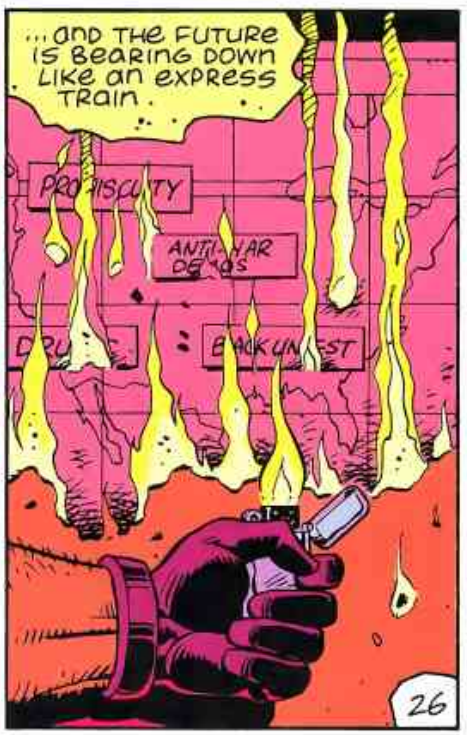
Edward Morgan Blake. Born 1924. Forty-five years a comedian, died 1985, buried in the rain.
Is that what happens to us? A life of conflict with no time for friends...

...so that when it's done, only our enemies leave roses.
EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE
1924 - 1985

Violent lives, ending violently. Dollar Bill, The Silhouette, Captain Metropolis... We never die in bed.
Not allowed.

Something in our personalities, perhaps? Some animal urge to fight and struggle, making us what we are?
Unimportant. We do what we have to do.

Others bury their heads between the swollen teats of indulgence and gratification, piglets squirming beneath a sow for shelter...
...but there is no shelter...


...and the future is bearing down like an express train.
PROMISCUITY
ANTI-WAR DEMOS
BLACK UNREST

BLAKE UNDERSTOOD. TREATED IT LIKE A JOKE, BUT HE UNDERSTOOD. HE SAW THE CRACKS IN SOCIETY, SAW THE LITTLE MEN IN MASKS TRYING TO HOLD IT TOGETHER...
HE SAW THE TRUE FACE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND CHOSE TO BECOME A REFLECTION, A PARODY OF IT.
NO ONE ELSE SAW THE JOKE. THAT'S WHY HE WAS LONELY.
HEARD JOKE ONCE:
MAN GOES TO DOCTOR. SAYS HE'S DEPRESSED. SAYS LIFE SEEMS HARSH AND CRUEL.
SAYS HE FEELS ALL ALONE IN A THREATENING WORLD WHERE WHAT LIES AHEAD IS VAGUE AND UNCERTAIN.
DOCTOR SAYS "TREATMENT IS SIMPLE. GREAT CLOWN PAGLIACCI IS IN TOWN TONIGHT. GO AND SEE HIM. THAT SHOULD PICK YOU UP."
MAN BURSTS INTO TEARS.
SAYS "BUT, DOCTOR...
"...I AM PAGLIACCI."

GOOD JOKE.
EVERYBODY LAUGH.
ROLL ON SNARE DRUM.
CURTAINS.
AKE
-198
EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE
924 - 1985
EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE
1924 -
CEMETERY
28
And I'm up while the dawn is breaking, even though my heart is aching.
I should be drinking a toast to absent friends instead of these comedians.
—Elvis Costello

Presented here are the excerpts from UNDER THE HOOD. In these next chapters Hollis Mason discusses the formation of the Minutemen. Reprinted with permission of the author.

III.

From the moment that I decided somewhere deep inside myself that I wanted to try my hand at being a costumed adventurer, to the moment I first stepped out into the night with a mask on my face and the wind on my bare legs, took about three months. Three months of self-doubt and self-ridicule. Three months of self-conscious training down at the Police Gymnasium. Three months figuring out how the hell I was going to make myself a costume.

The costume was difficult, because I couldn't start designing it until I'd thought of a name. This stumped me for a couple of weeks, because every name I came up with sounded stupid, and what I really wanted was something with the same sense of drama and excitement as "Hooded Justice."

Eventually, a suitable handle was provided inadvertently by one of the other cops that I worked with down at the station house. He'd invited me out for a beer after work two or three times only to be turned down because I wanted to spend as much of my evenings working out in the Police Gymnasiums as possible, after which I'd usually go to bed around nine o'clock and sleep through until five the next morning, when I'd get up and put in a couple of hours workout before donning my badge and uniform in readiness for my day job. After having his offer of beer and relaxation turned down yet again by reason of me wanting to be in bed early, he finally gave up asking and took to calling me "Nite Owl" out of sarcasm until he finally found somebody else to drink with.

"Nite Owl." I liked it. Now all I had to come up with was the costume.

A masked adventurer's costume is one of those things that nobody really thinks about. Should it have a cape, or no cape? Should it be thick and armored to protect you from harm, or flexible and lightweight to allow maneuverability? What sort of mask should it have? Do bright colors make you more of a target than dark ones? All of these were things that I had to consider.

Eventually, I opted for a design that left the arms and legs as free as possible, while protecting my body and head with a tough leather tunic, light chainmail briefs, and a layer of leather-over-chainmail protecting my head. I experimented with a cloak, remembering how the Shadow would use his cloak to misguide enemy bullets, leading them to shoot at parts of the swirling black mass where his body didn't happen to be. In practice, however, I found it too unwieldy. I was always tripping over it or getting it caught in things, and so I abandoned it for an outfit that was as streamlined as I could make it.

With the mail and leather headpiece hiding my hair, I found I only really needed a small domino mask to conceal my identity, but even this presented problems that weren't obvious at first glance. My first mask was attached to my face by the simple expediency of a string, but this nearly got me killed during my first ever outing in full costume, when a drunk with a knife hooked his fingers into the eyeholes of the domino and pulled it down so that I could only see out of one eye. If I'd been less fit and alert or he'd been less drunk my career might well have ended then. As it was I was able to tear off the mask completely and then disarm him, trusting that the alcohol would fog any clear recollection of my face. After that, I dispensed with the string and stuck the mask to my face using spirit gum, such as actors use to attach false beards or mustaches.

I first became Nite Owl during the early months of 1939, and although my first few exploits were largely unspectacular, they aroused a lot of media interest simply because by 1939, dressing up in costume and protecting your neighborhood had become something of a fad, with the whole of America at least briefly interested in its development. A month after I made my debut, a young woman who called herself The Silhouette broke into the headlines by exposing the activities of a crooked publisher trafficking in child pornography, delivering a punitive beating to the entrepreneur and his two chief cameramen in the process. A little after that, the first reports of a man dressed like a moth who could glide through the air started to come in from Connecticut, and a particularly vicious and brutal young man in a gaudy yellow

boiler suit started cleaning up the city's waterfronts under the name of The Comedian. Within twelve months of Hooded Justice's dramatic entrance into the public consciousness, there were at least seven other costumed vigilantes operating on or around America's West Coast.

There was Captain Metropolis, who brought a knowledge of military technique and strategy to his attempt at eradicating organized crime in the inner urban areas, and who is still active to this day.

There was The Silk Spectre, now retired and living with her daughter after an unsuccessful early marriage, who in retrospect was probably the first of us ever to realize that there could be commercial benefits in being a masked adventurer. The Silk Spectre used her reputation as a crimefighter primarily to make the front pages and receive exposure for her lucrative modeling career, but I think all of us who knew her loved her a little bit and we certainly didn't begrudge her a living. I think we were all too unsure of our own motives to cast aspersions upon anybody else.

There was Dollar Bill, originally a star college athlete from Kansas who was actually employed as an in-house super-hero by one of the major national banks, when they realized that the masked man fad made being able to brag about having a hero of your own to protect your customer's money a very interesting publicity prospect. Dollar Bill was one of the nicest and most straightforward men I have ever met, and the fact that he died so tragically young is something that still upsets me whenever I think about it. While attempting to stop a raid upon one of his employer's banks, his cloak became entangled in the bank's revolving door and he was shot dead at point-blank range before he could free it. Designers employed by the bank had designed his costume for maximum publicity appeal. If he'd designed it himself he might have left out that damned stupid cloak and still be alive today.

There was Mothman and The Silhouette and The Comedian and there was me, all of us choosing to dress up in gaudy opera costumes and express the notion of good and evil in simple, childish terms, while over in Europe they were turning human beings into soap and lampshades. We were sometimes respected, sometimes analyzed, and most often laughed at, and in spite of all the musings above, I don't think that those of us still surviving today are any closer to understanding just why we *really* did it all. Some of us did it because we were hired to and some of us did it to gain publicity. Some of us did it out of a sense of childish excitement and some of us, I think, did it for a kind of excitement that was altogether more adult if perhaps less healthy. They've called us fascists and they've called us perverts and while there's an element of truth in both those accusations, neither of them are big enough to take in the whole picture.

Yes, some of us were politically extreme. Before Pearl Harbor, I heard Hooded Justice openly expressing approval for the activities of Hitler's Third Reich, and Captain Metropolis has gone on record as making statements about black and Hispanic Americans that have been viewed as both racially prejudiced and inflammatory, charges that it is difficult to argue or deny.

Yes, I daresay some of us did have our sexual hang-ups. Everybody knows what eventually became of the Silhouette and although it would be tasteless to rehash the events surrounding her death in this current volume, it provides proof for those who need it that for some people, dressing up in a costume did have its more libidinous elements.

Yes, some of us were unstable and neurotic. Only a week ago as of this writing, I received word that the man behind the mask and wings of Mothman, whose true identity I am not at liberty to divulge, has been committed to a mental institution after a long bout of alcoholism and a complete mental breakdown.

Yes, we were crazy, we were kinky, we were Nazis, all those things that people say. We were also doing something because we believed in it. We were attempting, through our personal efforts, to make our country a safer and better place to live in. Individually, working on our separate patches of turf, we did too much good in our respective communities to be written off as mere aberration, whether social or sexual or psychological.

It was only when we got together that the problems really started. I sometimes think

without the Minutemen we might all have given up and called it quits pretty soon. The costumed adventurer might have become quietly and simply extinct.

And the world might not be in the mess it's in today.

IV.

There's no mystery behind how the Minutemen first got together. Captain Metropolis had written to Sally Jupiter care of her agent, suggesting that they might meet with a view to forming a group of masked adventurers who could pool their resources and experience to combat crime. The Captain has always had a strategic approach to crimefighting, so I can see why the idea would appeal to him, although back then I was surprised that he'd made an effort to get in touch with Sally. He was so polite and reserved that Sally's drinking, swearing and mode of dress were guaranteed to shock him speechless. Later, I realized that Sally was simply the only costumed vigilante forethoughtful enough to have an agent whose address was in the phone book.

Sally's agent (and, much later, her husband) was an extremely shrewd individual named Laurence Schexnayder. He realized that without the occasional gimmick to revitalize flagging public interest, the fad for long underwear heroes would eventually fade, reducing his girl Sally's chances of media exposure as The Silk Spectre to zero. Thus it was Schexnayder, in mid-1939, who suggested placing a large ad in the Gazette asking other mystery men to come forward.

One by one we came, over the next few weeks. We were introduced to Sally, to Captain Metropolis, to each other and to Laurence Schexnayder. He was very organized and professional, and although only in his mid-thirties he seemed very mature and respectable to us back then. Maybe that was just because he'd be the only person in the room not wearing their boxer shorts over their pants. By the fall of '39 he'd arranged all the publicity and the Minutemen were finally born.

The *real* mystery is how the hell we managed to *stay* together.

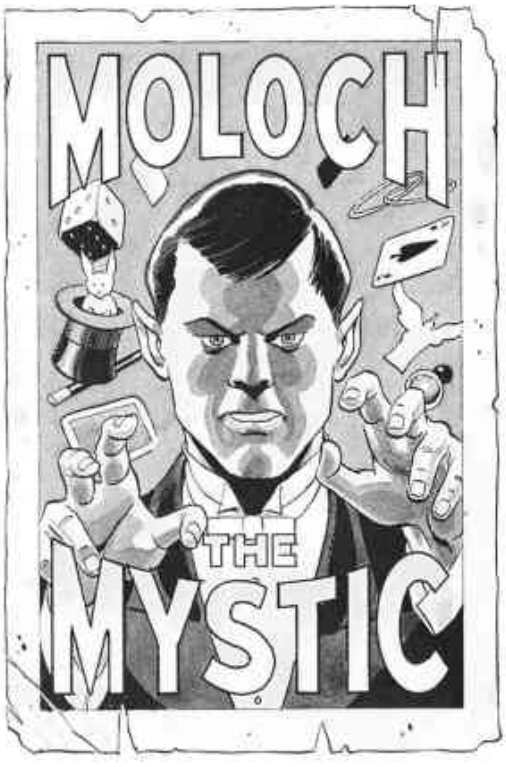
Dressing up in a costume takes a very extreme personality, and the chances of eight such personalities getting along together were about seventy-eleven million to one against. This isn't to say that some of us didn't get along, of course. Sally attached herself pretty swiftly to Hooded Justice, who was one of the biggest men I've ever seen. I never found out his real name, but I'd be willing to bet that those early news reports weren't far off in comparing him to a wrestler. Strangely enough, even though Sally would always be hanging onto his arm, he never seemed very interested in *her*. I don't think I ever saw him kiss her, although maybe that was just because of his mask. Anyway, they started going out together, sort of, after the first Minutemen Christmas Party in 1939, which is the last time I can remember us all having a real good time together. After that, things went bad. We had worms in the apple, eating it from inside.

The first Minutemen Christmas party, 1939 (from left to right) The Silhouette, Silk Spectre, Comedian, Hooded Justice, Captain Metropolis (in mirror), Nite Owl, Mothman, Dollar Bill

The worst of these was the Comedian. I'm aware that he's still active today and even respected in some quarters, but I know what I know, and that man is a disgrace to our profession. In 1940 he attempted to sexually assault Sally Jupiter in the Minutemen trophy room after a meeting. He left the group shortly thereafter by mutual consent and with a minimum of publicity. Schexnayder had persuaded Sally not to press charges against the Comedian for the good of the group's image, and she complied. The Comedian went his way unscathed...even though he was badly wounded in an unconnected stabbing incident about a year later. This is what made him decide to change his flimsy yellow costume for the leather armor he wears at present. He went on to make a name for himself as a war hero in the Pacific, but all I can think of is the bruises along Sally Jupiter's ribcage and hope to God that America can find itself a better class of hero than *that*.

Newsreel footage of the Comedian in the South Pacific, 1942

After that, things deteriorated. In 1946, the papers revealed that the Silhouette was living with another woman in a lesbian relationship. Schexnayder persuaded us to expel her from the group, and six weeks later she was murdered, along with her lover, by one of her former enemies. Dollar Bill was shot dead, and in 1947 the group was dealt its most serious blow when Sally quit crimefighting to marry her agent. We always thought she might come back, but in 1949 she had a daughter, so that clinched that. Eventually, those of us who were left didn't even fight crime anymore. It wasn't interesting. The villains we'd fought with were either in prison or had moved on to less glamorous activities. Moloch, for example, who had started out aged seventeen as a stage magician, evolving into an ingenious and flamboyant criminal mastermind through underworld contacts made in his world of nightclubs, had moved into impersonal crime like drugs, financial fraud and vice clubs by the late '40s. Eventually, there was just me, Mothman, Hooded Justice and Captain Metropolis sitting around in a meeting hall that smelled like a locker room now that there weren't any women in the group. There was nobody interesting left to fight, nothing notable to talk about. In 1949, we called it a day. By then, however, we'd been around long enough to somehow inspire younger people, God help them, to follow in our footsteps.



Early publicity poster of Moloch, 1937

The Minutemen were finished, but it didn't matter. The damage had already been done.

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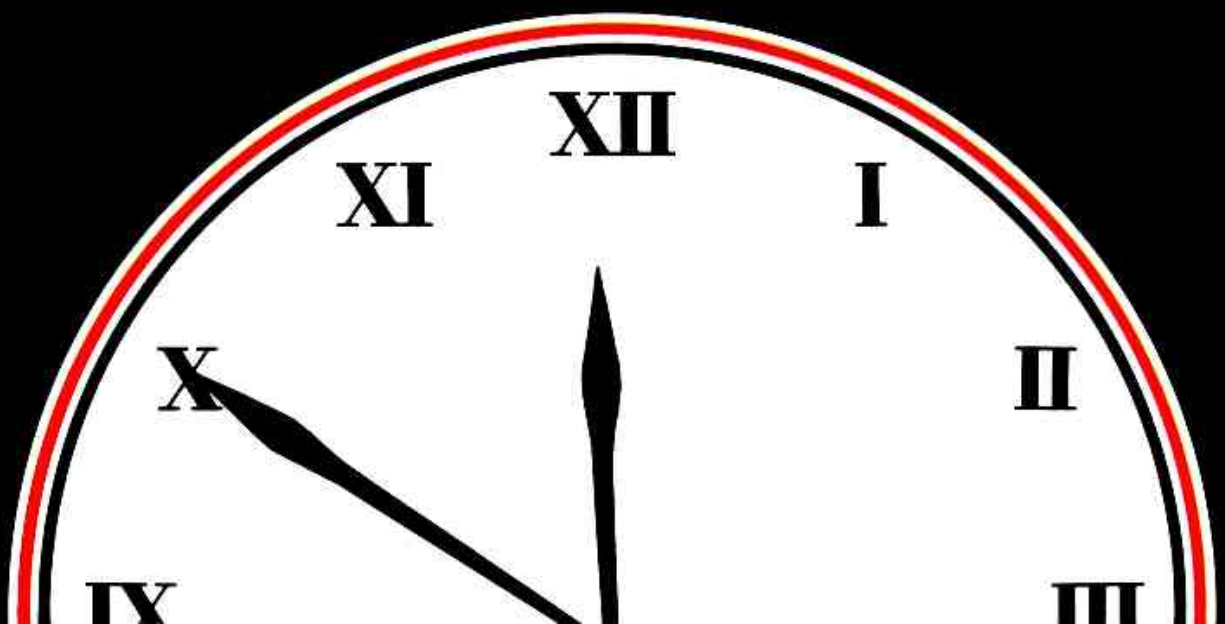
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